We repeat our expression of the Journal's National Policy: Annex Hawaii, secure bases in the West Indies, dig the Nicaragua Canal, build the finest navy in the world, and construct great national universities at West Point and Annapolis. And we reaffirm our declaration in favor of the Jeffersonian principle of national expansion.

NEW YORK JOURNAL AND ADVERTISER.
W. R. HEARST.

AN AMERICAN PAPER FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE OF GREATER AMERICA.

President McKinley has a habit of disappointing expectations in his messages, and in the portentous document submitted to Congress yesterday he did not deviate from the rule. The unprecedented circumstances of the time invited and seemed to compel the production of a state paper that should rank as one of the colossal landmarks of our political history. But Mr. McKinley successfully resisted every inducement to produce such a paper. The proof sheets of all the twenty thousand words of the message might have been left unguarded over night without tempting any journalistic burglar to appropriate them.

THE PRESIDENT AS HISTORIAN.

The first third of the essay might have been omitted with much advantage to the readableness of the remainder. It is simply a history of the war with Spain, recounting the familiar story in the baldest official style, and destitute of a single new fact.

NO COLONIAL POLICY.

The President is absolutely non-committal as to the policy to be adopted with regard to our new possessions. He intimates that this matter may be discussed after the treaty of peace has been ratified, and in the meantime, in the absence of legislation by Congress, he proposes to continue the military governments which have existed since our occupation.

CUBA TO BE FREE.

On one point President McKinley is commendably explicit. He reiterates the assurance that Cuba is to be absolutely independent. He does not even mention annexation as a possibility. **"It should be our duty,"** he declares, **"to assist in every way to build up the waste places of the island, encourage the industry of the people, and assist them to form a government which shall be free and independent, thus realizing the best aspirations of the Cuban people."**

These are needed words, and, coming from such a source, they ought to check the foreign tendency to describe our war as one of selfish aggression.

THE BUTCHERY AT LATTIMER.

The message makes it evident that some foreign governments regard the lives of their subjects more seriously than our own Government regards the lives of American citizens. The slaughter of the miners at Lattimer, which was so generally applauded in high quarters in this country, was deeply resented by Austria-Hungary, which had a dozen subjects among the killed. Even the verdict of the intelligent jury which decided that the killing served the miners right has not satisfied the Austrian authorities, who have gone so far as to put in a claim for an indemnity from our Government.

THE NICARAGUA CANAL.

The President ranges himself unmistakably among the advocates of the Nicaragua Canal. He urges action in behalf of the enterprise at the present session of Congress, and declares that "our national policy now, more imperatively than ever, calls for its control by this Government." That is excellent as far as it goes, but it would have been better yet if the President had explained exactly what he meant by "control," and best of all if he had announced in unmistakable terms that the canal should be constructed, owned and operated by the United States.

HAWAII ANNEXED.

Mr. McKinley recounts with just satisfaction the steps by which the credit of placing the key of the Pacific under American control was secured to his Administration. But he gives no hint of the nature of the government he thinks should be given to Hawaii. All that is left for the report of the commission that has been investigating the subject.

NO RADICAL CURRENCY REFORM.

President McKinley disappoints the currency reformers by declining to recommend the retirement of the greenbacks and the substitution of bank notes. He would like to have a provision adopted forbidding the reissue of greenbacks redeemed in gold except in exchange for gold. This, of course, would eventually transform all the legal tender notes into gold certificates, with which consummation Mr. McKinley apparently would consider the currency question happily settled.

A MIGHTY NAVY.

The President heartily indorses Secretary Long's new naval programme of three first class battle ships, three 12,000-ton armored cruisers, three cruisers of 6,000 and six of 2,500 tons each. He also indorses the proposition to revive the grades of Admiral and Vice Admiral for the benefit of officers who have distinguished themselves in the late war. The Admiral part of this recommendation will meet with no objection—Dewey will carry that through—but the Vice Admiral part will revive the Sampson-Schley controversy, and by the time the matter is settled we may have two Vice Admirals or none at all.

THE NEW CENSUS.

The message properly calls attention to the urgent need for a prompt provision for the census of 1900. Our last national stock-taking in the nineteenth century and our first as a colonial world power will be a matter of supreme interest and importance, and it is the duty of Congress to see at once that it shall not be Porterized and ruined.

A GREAT ARMY.

The President seconds Alger's request for an army of 100,000 men, but in an apologetic tone that indicates a realization of the unpopularity of the project. But he makes no attempt to explain, 1, why 100,000 men are needed; 2, why they should cost more than Germany pays for nearly 600,000 regulars, 4,000,000 reserves and her entire navy, including the construction of new ships, or, 3, why any reorganization at all should be intrusted to Alger.

THE NATIONAL POLICY.

Four of the five points of the Journal's National Policy receive indorsement in the message. **Hawaiian annexation, the Nicaragua Canal, the mighty navy,** and **strategic bases in the West Indies** are favorably dwelt upon. If the President had not burled his judicious observations on these subjects in such a mass of unnecessary verbiage his essay would have been much more generally read and more highly appreciated.

TWO PRESIDENTIAL PETS OVERLOOKED.

UNCLE SAM: "You've taken room enough to cover almost everything, William; but haven't you forgotten something?"

PROTECT LIVES IN SKY SCRAPERS.

That a fire-proof building would always burn, under favorable conditions, has long been the belief of practical firemen. The fact was strikingly demonstrated in the destruction of the upper stories of the Home Life Insurance Company's building. Although this structure was devised after the most modern and enlightened plans, it was at the mercy of the flames, and owing to its great height the Fire Department was powerless.

More startling still was the absence of fire-escapes. Fortunately the offices were deserted when the fire broke out, or great loss of life must have resulted.

All our New York towering office buildings are a menace to safety. Not less than fifty thousand people, many of them women, are employed in offices above the reach of effective fire department work.

Fire-escapes are absolutely necessary on all these skyscrapers. Not an ordinary ladder, a death trap in itself, but a broad iron stairway, properly protected, should be provided, so that a woman could reach the street without the fear of losing her footing and being dashed to death.

In the interest of the thousands whose lives are daily endangered by the neglect or niggardliness of the owners of the many office buildings that are without fire-escapes the Journal demands that this evil be remedied without delay.

A LESSON IN CONDENSATION.

The President would obtain more readers for his literary efforts if he would take a course of lessons in the art of "boiling down" in some good newspaper office. For instance, instead of the 20,000 words he unloaded upon Congress yesterday he might have said this:

"We have thrashed Spain and remembered the Maine. I am running Porto Rico and the Philippines. Cuba can run herself as soon as we think her ready. Foreign governments don't like to have their subjects shot. Dig the Nicaragua Canal. Give a million dollars for the Paris Exposition. We are trying to make up with Canada. I shall let you know what to do with Hawaii as soon as I know myself. When you give gold for greenbacks don't give the greenbacks for anything but gold. Give Alger 100,000 regulars. Build a mighty navy. Discourage yellow fever. Drum up trade in China. Take care of the next census. Make Dewey an Admiral, and let me pick my man for Vice Admiral. Preserve the forests. Celebrate the centennial of the foundation of Washington. Au revoir.

"WILLIAM M'KINLEY."

A YOUNG MAN'S OPPORTUNITIES.

Yesterday was an eventful day in the career of Frank Jay Gould. He attained his majority and incidentally inherited $10,000,000.

If young Gould had been born in the first year of the Christian era, and had lived and labored until this hour at a salary of $5,000 a year, and had saved every cent of it without demanding interest on his money, he would have succeeded in accumulating the vast fortune that according to his father's will has now been placed to his credit.

What will this boy do with it? What are his ambitions? What dreams has he cherished? What ideals will he realize?

Being an intelligent, clear-headed young fellow, he has probably asked himself these questions and answered them. In the absence of his decision it will be interesting to remark upon his opportunities and to speculate upon his intentions.

With a minimum income of $500,000 a year Mr. Gould can spend $100,000 on his personal expenses, and have $400,000 to trifle away, to bestow in charity or to add to his millions. Will he follow the example of so many rich men and wear his life out in the pursuit of more wealth, or will he give himself over to luxurious idleness and the enjoyment of selfish pleasures?

He may do neither. At present he is making a practical study of the railroad business. He can be found every day at his desk in the offices of the Missouri Pacific Railway Company.

The indications are that he will refuse to fritter away either his time or his money. That he may not endow a library, found a hospital for little children, go in for building model tenements, or do any of the conventional things for the amelioration of the poor is probable, but that he starts out with the earnest purpose to lead a useful life is certain, and it may not be too much to hope that with maturity will come the realization that $10,000,000 is a little more than will keep the wolf from the door.

With that point gained, Mr. Gould might spend the remainder of a very useful career in preventing his left hand from knowing what his right hand was doing.

AN ASSASSIN'S IMPUDENCE.

As only a moral idiot could have committed the crime of assassinating the amiable and unoffending Empress of Austria, it is not surprising that Luccheni, her murderer, should have the colossal impudence to complain of his punishment—life imprisonment. In any other European country save Switzerland the death penalty would have been inflicted long ago, and had his deed been done among Orientals torture would have preceded death. But it is characteristic of Luccheni, as it was of Guiteau and Prendergast, to feel an immense sense of personal merit and importance. Only abnormal egotism such as his can produce a feeling of injury in the light of which the taking of a human life in reprisal seems not merely justifiable but praiseworthy. Luccheni undoubtedly regards himself as a great and admirable public character—a representative of the wrongs of the submerged poor. Besides that, his vanity renders his removal from the public gaze intolerable to him. He is of the breed to prefer the publicity of a dramatic end on the scaffold to the dull routine of unnoticed existence within a prison's walls.

Most people will regret that under the law of Geneva Luccheni cannot in response to his appeal against the sentence of life imprisonment be granted a halter, but the more thoughtful will reflect that to one of his peculiar temperament the jail and continued existence constitute a much severer punishment than death would be.

THE RAILROADS AND THE CANAL.

The railroads are carrying on an active campaign against the Nicaragua Canal. Their literary bureau is putting forth pamphlets written by hired statisticians, who uphold the thesis that the canal would be of no use either to the navy or to commerce. They contend that the competition of the overland railroads would be so strenuous as to deprive the waterway of business.

If the Nicaragua Canal rendered no other service than to reduce and permanently keep down railroad charges the people could well afford to build it. It is because the railroad companies are keenly awake to this fact that they will employ every art that intelligence can suggest and money command to throw obstacles in the way.

That voyage of the Oregon down one side of the hemisphere and up the other has settled the canal question so far as the American people are concerned. Many railroad literary bureaus and whole regiments of purchased special pleaders would avail nothing as against that physical demonstration of the military need of the United States for a passage from ocean to ocean.

A THREADBARE MISREPRESENTATION.

General Shafter and his defenders persist in the assumption that the navy's desire for the co-operation of the troops in the capture of the forts at Santiago was due to an unwillingness to risk the fire of the Spanish batteries. As Admiral Sampson repeatedly explained when the plans were under consideration that it was not the risk from the guns, but the certainty of destruction from the mines that made him reluctant to take his ships unnecessarily into a trap that could easily be made harmless, as the explanation has been reiterated times without number since, and as the thing was always obvious to any ordinary intelligence without an explanation, the persistence of General Shafter's friends in sticking to the original misrepresentation is evidence that they have no honest defence to offer.

ALWAYS FOR CUBAN LIBERTY.

Mr. F. B. Roland, of Brooklyn, writes to the Journal, recalling its efforts before the war in behalf of Cuban independence, and concluding:

How is it that I find the Journal advocating the acquisition of Cuba, instead of seeking to give the Cuban people what they fought so hard for, their absolute liberty?

Mr. Roland does not find anything of the sort. If people who write letters to newspapers would take the trouble beforehand to read the things they criticise much needless inkshed would be spared. The Journal has never missed an opportunity to denounce the scheme of Cuban annexation, and to demand the fulfilment, in spirit and letter, of our promise to give independence to the island.

True Definition of Expansion.

Editor of the New York Journal:

Dear Sir—I would like to see the Journal's editor's "national expansion does not mean national piracy" "nailed to the mast" as the true definition of "expansion." Neither we nor our proteges are prepared to debate the question of annexation. For the present, intelligent military rule, like that of General Wood at Santiago, and the co-operation of the schoolmaster for our colonies. When, under our supervision and control, they prove themselves capable of self-government, then annexation may become a debatable question. But as a military necessity they must always remain a part of our territory and we should always keep a representative of the mother country at the colonies (and at their expense) to see that a republican form of government is enforced, and to prevent the exploitations of the people by the money power.

Yours very truly, J. HAGGERTY.

No. 101 West Fifty-fifth street, New York City, December 4.

SEMBRICH IN "TRAVIATA."

ALAN DALE ON THE OPERA AT THE METROPOLITAN.

THE role of Dumas's tuberculous Lady of the Camelias, made musical by Verdi, is still a very vital role, and every prima donna with a fine selection of diamonds and high notes loves it. Violetta in "La Traviata," like Marguerite Gautier in "Camille," is a "star" role—one that renders every other part insignificant, and holds the centre of the stage with a genuinely dramatic fervor. It gives a great opportunity to the prima donna who is addicted to what may be called Fourth-of-July of the voice, and who has managed to acquire during her travels among queens and czars and other foreign potentates a variegated collection of gems. She can wear all the jewels she possesses plastered across her breast, in the first act, if she chooses, for they are extremely appropriate during that magnificent property supper scene, where hungry looking supers and superines are allowed to "set to," and enjoy a nice meal of papier mache apples and wax candles. Patti was a glittering marvel when she used to sing Violetta.

It was Marcella Sembrich who undertook the part at the Metropolitan Opera House last night. Nobody doubted her ability to acquit herself creditably, for Violetta is not a part that the novice or the debutante would care to sing. There was consequently an extremely big house, drawn probably by Sembrich rather than by "Traviata"—an opera which we have grown to associate with barrel organs and hurdy-gurdies, and "Popular Selections for Small Fingers," to say nothing of "Seaside Melodies." (Melodies are always packed off to the seaside when they get stale.)

Mme. Sembrich "made good" in marvellously quick time, and when the first act came to an end the house broke into cheers. No, they were not the usual perfunctory cheers that a number of stentorian gentlemen at the back wear for appearances' sake. They were genuine, and they were deserved. The curtain was lifted seven or eight times, and the audience declined to settle down until Sembrich had sent up a few more vocal rockets. The prima donna was really magnificent. Her trills sounded like those of a chubby, well-fed bird, and her roulades were clear and irresistible. She managed to throw a certain amount of fervor into her work, and I am perfectly convinced that she enjoyed singing just as much as we enjoyed hearing her sing. She splashed through the florid passages with an intrepidity worthy of Patti, and dived successfully for the high notes in a way that made the audience say "Oh!"

The effect of hearing fireworks is really not very unlike that of seeing them. As you listened to Sembrich you felt the sensation of agreeable amazement that you experience when you see a colossal Catherine wheel sputtering forth gorgeous sparks, or a whole pack of firecrackers exploded at once, regardless of expense.

Sembrich has "arrived," and I shall be

Mme. Sembrich.

very much surprised if this operatic season has any more powerful card to play. There is absolutely no doubt about the fate of Sembrich in New York this year. She is a woman with temperament, and I hold that temperament is necessary—even at the opera. Of course it is always agreeable to listen to a glacial lady with a perfect voice, highly cultivated, warbling Juliet like an irreproachable iceberg. But something more than voice is necessary, and that something is thrust forward by Sembrich. Her work is not absolutely free from effort at times, but for all that it appeals to you, and it is a delightful surprise at all times.

Physically, I suppose that it would be impossible to secure an ideal Lady of the Camelias in opera. Sembrich didn't impress me with the idea that the germs of tuberculosis were hovering among her diamonds. Nor was there the suspicion of a craving for cod liver oil in the repressed tumult of her embonpoint. She was tightly corsetted, and she suggested a ripe old age, and a series of curtain lectures for her Armand Duval.

I presume that there is no such thing as a vocal Sarah Bernhardt. Songbirds grow fat with wonderful regularity, for their work is healthy, and muscular development seems to be a result of vocal calesthenics. So you are obliged to shut your eyes when they sing—to accept an Isolde who is apparently training for Huber's, a Juliet who looks as though she could take Romeo on her knee and spank him, and a consumptive Camille, who is radiant with health and who has lungs that Dr. Koch's lymph would simply laugh at.

Nobody pays very much attention to the story of an opera—fortunately. I have no doubt that there were very many people in last night's audience who had no idea that "Traviata" was a musical version of "Camille." They saw and heard the amazing Sembrich singing to, at, by and around a neat young man in velvet knickerbockers trimmed with cheap lace, and they asked no questions. It is not the least use in the world expecting anything more from opera than music. Tradition says that opera must be sung with scenery and costumes, but I am inclined to think that it would be just as acceptable without them.

In the scene with Armand's father, Sembrich was duly melancholy and pathetic. Perhaps it was at this time that the story began to be apparent. But she was obliged to reserve her pathos until she had finished singing. No prima donna can convey the idea of mortal anguish while she is trilling birdily and running up and down the scales. Sembrich blanched her face a little in this scene to act up to the dawn of consumption, but she was still miraculously healthy.

The role of Alfredo—Armand Duval—was sung by that meek and sequestered young person, M. Salignac. This gentleman is an excellent foil for any Violette. He is so tame, so discreet, and so exceedingly anxious for the background. Alfredo was carefully upholstered in velvet, edged with bargain-counter lace, and he looked very much surprised at himself, and as though he couldn't help wondering why he was there. M. Salignac sang correctly enough, although he had no objection to an occasional episode of flatness. He never rose to the occasion. Possibly that was because Mme. Sembrich was the occasion, and she was incomparably beyond him. Such a costume as that invariably assigned to Alfredo must depress a singer, I should think. To act in these clothes is bad enough, but to stand in the middle of the stage and chant in them must be galling.

The other roles were assigned to Campanari, who is "doing himself proud" this season; to little Mlle. Bauermeister, who is as familiar with Wagner as she is with Verdi; to Miss Roudez, Signor Vanni, Jacques Bars, Lempriere Pringle and M. Dufriche.

But "Traviata" last night was Sembrich, and it was not a Sembrich merely loaded with diamonds and high notes. It was a Sembrich vive with art, bristling with dramatic and vocal energy, happy, applauded and successful. The face of the prima donna, as she responded to the enthusiasm of the house, was a study. It reflected just about as much bliss as this tearful world grants to the average worker in it. Sembrich enjoyed herself, and so did we.

ALAN DALE.

Busy.

"Do you find the cares of State fatiguing?" inquired the interviewer.

"Fatiguing!" echoed Li Hung Chang. "I should say so! It keeps me busy seeing how many Russian roubles there are in an English pound, and then getting the result in Chinese taels so as to make sure who is offering the most money."—Washington Star.

It Pleased Him.

The Secretary—An express package, senor.

Senor Sagasta—At last. Here, let me open it. Yes, the treaty millions are here.

The Secretary—This is another sad but glorious day, senor.

Senor Sagasta—It is, my boy; it is. And I only wish it was four times as sad and seven times as glorious.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

FIRE AND SKY SCRAPERS.

COMMISSIONER SCANNELL DISCUSSES AN IMPORTANT MATTER.

THE fire in the Home Insurance Building proved what I have always contended, that there is no such thing in New York as an absolutely fire-proof building. It proves that all you have to do to burn anything is to make the fire hot enough. I have held to this theory ever since the mania for building sky-scrapers began.

A great many architects and builders have laughed at me and proved, at least to their own satisfaction, on paper, that a modern eighteen-story building was not inflammable. But their theories have all gone up in the smoke of last night's fire.

In 1894 I had a long conference with Chief Bonner on the subject of fire-proof buildings, and I advised him to make the recommendation, which he subsequently did, that a building several hundred feet above the ground, filled by thousands of people, needs more, and not less, protection against fire than an ordinary old-fashioned three-story residence.

I am not, however, opposed to the building of these structures. In a crowded, congested city like this a high building is, perhaps, a good thing—even a necessity. But, in order to be habitable, it should be properly guarded against fire.

To do this is not as difficult as might be supposed. Let a law be passed compelling every high building to have on its roof a large tank, to hold at least 5,000 gallons of water, to be used exclusively in case of fire, this tank to be connected with hose nozzles on each floor, the tank will be supplied by a steam pump in the basement, so that it will be always ready for use.

The working and management would be entirely in charge of a special fire engineer. According to the law, which I would suggest, the owners of every high structure would be compelled to employ such a man, who would be responsible to the Fire Department and under its supervision. In fact, he would be practically a fireman detailed for that particular building, just as policemen are often detached from the regular force for some special work.

In case of a fire, it would be this man's duty to get the hose ready on all the floors, and have things fairly under way before the engines got to the scene.

That is one of my suggestions, but it isn't the only one. The whole theory of municipal legislation in regard to high buildings is, I believe, based on a wrong principle.

The supposition is that a sky-scraper cannot be made to burn and therefore needs less protection than an ordinary building.

By a special regulation of the Building Board these structures are exempted from all those anti-fire methods in construction which we rigidly enforce in other buildings.

A sixteen-story building is not compelled to have a fire-escape, the stairway can wind around the elevator shaft, and it can invite fire in a great many other ways, just because the men who supervise its erection regard it as they would a piece of asbestos, a thing absolutely impervious to fire.

Now, I hold that all this sort of thing is wrong. Just because high buildings are popular, just because people do work and live and swarm over them, every precaution known to modern fire fighters ought to be employed in their construction.

As a matter of course they ought to have fire-escapes from the roof to the basement of the most improved design. One stairway is not enough. There should be at least two, and more if possible. In every instance the extra stairway ought to be placed as great a distance as possible from the elevator shaft.

To suppose that just because a building is modern and called fire proof it will stand such a fiery furnace draught as poured against that wall is perfectly ridiculous.

The only wonder to my mind is that the fire did not do a great deal more damage. I expected that it would sweep clear to the river.

It was one of the best managed fires I ever looked at.

To fight the flames thirteen stories above the ground is a new experience for the majority of firemen. No water tower or ordinary hydrant hose could possibly carry anything like that distance.

Fresh hose had to be carried up in sections to the upper floor of the Postal Telegraph Building and attached to the nozzles there. It involved a vast amount of work and was accomplished in an almost incredibly short time.

I have one other suggestion to make. The permission of the Building Department is all that is necessary for the architect or owner of a proposed sky-scraper. I think that the Fire Department ought to be consulted before the plans are finally passed. Men who by life-long practice have become experts in knowing where and how a fire is likely to break out would, it seems to me, be far more liable to detect the absence of any needed fire precautions than a mere building commissioner, no matter how thorough the knowledge of his department might be.

Fire Commissioner, New York.

SIGNATURE IN NEWSPAPERS.

There were some reporters of marked ability when the war cloud burst in 1861. Sent to the front as war correspondents, they turned out work neither better nor worse than that of many others, and what they wrote disappeared in the smother of the daily press. Then came Secretary Stanton's order that correspondents should sign their articles, and these men wrote their names. Thereupon they became personal to their readers, and gradually there grew up in those readers' minds the idea of entities, of individuals who were telling them by day what they saw and heard. The correspondence became much more interesting, not only because personality enabled the men to tell their stories with more directness, but because their readers soon felt an interest in the adventures of men whom they knew by name. Four years of this caused the public to want more from these men, and the men themselves had a value to newspapers depending on their personality. They went high in the newspaper world, for each had genuine ability of his own; but it was the signature that furnished the ladder of personality on which they climbed.—Alfred Balch, in December Lippincott's.